

2 : LOC-HAK-242-10-2-9

Washington, D. C. 20520

REFER TO DOS

REFER TO CIA

Executive Assistant to the Secretary

CIA REVIEWED 30-Nov-2010: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION.

LSE

DOS REVIEWED 11-Jan-2011: NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION.

Subject: Graham Martin's Dissent Message

Why is Graham Martin the best we've got? Read the attached "Dissent Channel" message which he drafted in reply to two "dissent" messages from a disaffected junior officer. This officer, now assigned to Belgrade, accused Martin of deliberately shading his reporting, suppressing some information and otherwise distorting our picture of the "real situation" in VietNam.

Graham responds four-square and head on. It's a thoughtful message which you should read. The Secretary also--although I'm not sure if the dissenting officer or the dissent channel could survive the latter.

Graham's chief point is this: that Smith's dissent is not only factually wrong but that the Department and whoever handles this channel(S/P and the Open Forum) did a disservice both to him personally and the Service. To Martin personally because he was not informed directly of the challenge nor given much chance to respond. And to the Service because legitimate dissent channels have been abused in this instance and also because

the abuse has undercut discipline and unity within the service. (Martin considers this particular Dissent to be an ad hominem attack upon the honor of a senior officer).

You should read this message not just for Martin's sake. It is clear that he has been done dirty on this. You also should read it to consider one necessary reform/reminder in the use of the Dissent channel:

a) Dissent should be directed at policy-- not at ~~how~~ operational aspects+ ~~of~~ how a Chief of Mission handles his post. This is better a matter for the Inspectorate. Otherwise, the Channel can easily degenerate into a spitting and accusatory vehicle for juniors to berate the seniors.

b). The Department should instruct that the object of the Dissent be informed of the message and its contents within 48 hours.

Graham has a point. I'm sorry that I did not insist with you that he receive an immediate copy, as I suggested to you. If you will recall,



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LAB	TAR	TR	XMB
AIR	ARMY	NAVY	OSD
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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : Department of State

E. O. : N/A
TAGS : AMGT, VSINFO :
DEPT PASS:

FROM : American Embassy, Saigon

DATE: December 17, 1974

SUBJECT : Dissent Message

REF : A) Belgrade A-442; B) State 225131; C) State 260551;
D) State 260507

1. I have not, until now, found time to look seriously at Belgrade's A-442, the text of which was forwarded to me in Ref A and the Department's response contained in Ref B. Now that Mr. Smith has again raised the question in Ref C and the Department has again responded in Ref D, perhaps a few comments from me might be useful.

2. I had a copy of Mr. Smith's message for some time before I received it officially on October 22, 1974. Its substance is, of course, a most serious charge against the most valued item any diplomat can carry in his professional baggage - his reputation for total professional integrity, and his competence to insure that reporting to the Department is objective, dispassionate, and wholly accurate.

3. Now it is true that I personally have, perhaps, an old-fashioned set of values. I was taught by my superiors almost three decades ago that the Foreign Service, if it was to serve the President, the Secretary, and the American people, as they must have an internal discipline and cohesion arising from mutual respect and a common understanding of that lesson from Jefferson Caffrey, Charles Bohlen, Jamie Bonbright, Theodore Achilles, Phillip Bonsal, Hugh Fullerton and others, it simply would never have occurred to me to file such charges against a fellow officer without confronting him with my suspicions, either personally or by private communication,

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Drafted by:
AMB:GMartin:ekDrafting Date:
12/17/74Phone No.:
7300

Content and Classification Approved by:

Clearances:

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and attempting to arrive at a personal judgment only after I had carefully considered what he had to say. That is the course followed by one of Mr. Smith's colleagues in Can Tho. But not by Mr. Smith.

4. Nor by those in the Department charged by the Secretary with monitoring his "Dissent Channel". I was hoping the Department would respond immediately to me, or to any officer so accused, asking for whatever comment he cared to make before the Department responded. It seemed to me that failure to do so would violate the most elemental canons of common decency and fairness. It also seemed to me that failure to do so would mark the Department's further descent into the neo-McCarthyism which has already been embraced by a small segment of the so-called "investigative reporters" of today's American press. These, in turn, have also infected a few of the young Foreign Service Officers, whose academic exposure took place in the middle and late sixties with the consequence that, as one now retired Service colleague observed, many are not only ignorant of history but seem to be wholly innocent of the fact that history exists. Fortunately, there are only a very few.

5. The most charitable comment I can make about the Department's failure to recognize Mr. Smith's message was in no way a "dissent" case dealing with policy but an ad hominem attack on the integrity of a fellow officer, requiring he be immediately informed, was that it was assumed that since the charges regarding the Embassy reporting in the Senate Staff report had been met head on in the July 25 session I had with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and disposed of; that since on subsequent press inquiry the Department spokesman was personally authorized by the Secretary to term it completely unfounded, it was not, therefore, deemed necessary to

No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/05/02 : LOC-HAK-242-10-2-9 is equally unfair to Mr. Smith. I will come to that later.

6. A preliminary comment may have some relevance. If I had been afraid of such attacks, I would not have accepted the Saigon assignment. It was totally certain that such attacks would be as inevitable as they have been on every Chief of this Mission for the last fifteen years. It is, of course, essential for those opposed to U. S. policy in Southeast Asia to attempt to discredit U. S. Mission reporting.

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*you may
recall that
I asked
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we should
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Matter of
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Otherwise their principal weapon - propaganda - would be blunted in its attempt to persuade the world that the fighting in Viet-Nam was only an indigenous uprising compelled because of the intolerable tyranny of a wholly repressive regime. For years Hanoi has vehemently denied that a single North Vietnamese soldier was in the South. Hanoi has not deviated from the figure of 200,000 "political prisoners" for the past fifteen years, providing this figure through every media opening it can find. Others, as Hanoi well knew, would establish their credibility and objectivity by lowering this figure by varying degrees - to 100,000 by Amnesty International; to 40,000-60,000 by a Senate Appropriations Sub-Committee and even 500 to 1,500 by the Department. All were totally wrong. The patient, painstaking work of FSO Harry Sizer, and the circulation I helped give his findings, has largely demolished the issue in the Congress.

7. Again the controversy between the U. S. Mission and the Saigon based American press is a historical continuum since the early sixties when the Buddhist bonzes were carefully programmed for immolation only when the TV cameras were in place. Therefore, a continuing controversy could not be avoided if the U. S. Mission insisted that its reporting should be held to a standard which insisted the American people and the Department had an inalienable right to the whole truth rather than the theatrical distortions still demanded of many Saigon reporters by their editors.

8. The third certainty concerned some of the junior officers. Many were really innocent of any historical perspective, most were handicapped by the considerable burden of an erroneous conventional wisdom which they could not possibly escape absorbing from the pervasive propaganda campaign of distortions about Viet-Nam which has flooded America since the sixties. Some few would be certain that, as in the Indian allegory of the five blind men and the elephant, gave them an access to the revealed truth. Therefore, if their perceptive reports were not accepted as such by their superiors, distortion and "slanted reporting" had obviously taken place.

9. As expected, all three have materialized. Nevertheless, if United States interests were to be truly served, it would be essential

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11. Now we come to Mr. Smith. It appears from the attached comments of his supervisors in Can Tho and Nhatrang (Annexes C and D) that they have no recollection of his expressing concern over the Congen reporting, nor have I been able to find anyone in the Embassy to whom he expressed concern about the overall Mission reporting from Saigon. Yet, apparently motivated in part from the version of the Senate Staff Report appearing in the New York Herald Tribune, he raises questions in his original message about the accuracy and integrity of the Mission's reporting. He repeats these in his second message. Unfortunately he mentions only three examples, which will be discussed later.

10. When, as a result of a New York Times despatch, Senator Fulbright wrote the Department which queried me for the facts, I decided to answer the Senator directly. I might add I am pleasantly surprised to be again able to agree with Mr. Smith's characterization of the New York Times in his second message. The Senator has released the correspondence and it appears in the record of my report to the Committee on Foreign Relations on July 25, 1974. It is a revealing bit of correspondence, since the staffer who drafted the Senator's letter was also the author of the section of the staff report dealing with Mission reporting. The last part of my reply to the Senator's letter sets forth the standards I have set for this Mission's reporting. Also in this record are the report of the Senate Staff Study and my comments on the section dealing with the Mission's reporting. These two records are enclosed as Annex A and Annex B for the benefit of Mr. Smith who, even in his second message, is still apparently dealing with press reports rather than original documentary evidence.

and, I believe, with considerable success. not the slightest motive to do otherwise. This I have tried to do

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to permit none of them to divert the Mission from reporting the whole truth. As our policy demands that we try to speed up the process of winding up the U. S. involvement in Viet-Nam, in a way that will contribute to, not impede, the achievement of larger policy goals elsewhere in the world, there is an enormous premium in having the Mission reporting inform Washington with

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12. To take Mr. Smith's message in the sequence in which he presented it, I would agree with the first paragraph after his summary. The effects of the war in Viet-Nam do "continue on the Foreign Service and the Department." The effects are inimical, dangerous in the extreme, both to the interests of the nation, but also to the continuing utility of the Department and, most particularly, of the Foreign Service, to serve the President and the Secretary. I have long contended that both should be the principal instruments for foreign policy analysis, for formulating recommendations for policy changes to protect and advance American interests in a constantly evolving and rapidly changing pattern of power relationships, and finally for the overseeing of the execution of the President's foreign policies. Such a role is not likely to be afforded either the Department or the Foreign Service unless both can demonstrate a capacity for discipline, for dispassionate analysis, and for total integrity in Foreign Service reporting. The latter two qualities, dependent on the first, must be as remote from personal "engagement" or "involvement" as imperfect human beings can possibly manage.

13. Therein lies the validation of Mr. Smith's observation on the continuing adverse effects of "Viet-Nam" on the Foreign Service and the Department. But, not for the reasons he gives. Rather, I suggest, as long as young Foreign Service Officers, and their colleagues in the Department, insist that only those items which fit their preconceived conclusions can be reported, that those messages which their monopoly of the "revealed truth" prove to them are wrong can be leaked to journalists or Congressional critics, and as long as their actions are tolerated by their colleagues in the Service and excused, under whatever rubric, by those carrying senior responsibilities in the Department, we are in very grave danger that the President and the Secretary will use other mechanisms to carry out the most vital and sensitive parts of their constitutional responsibilities.

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Therein lies the real danger both to the Department and to the Foreign Service. While young Congressional staffers and young "engaged" investigative journalists (subject to and inevitably and obviously affected by the same flood of distortions about Viet-Nam which characterized the sixties and still exists) may delude themselves that the end justifies the means, the Department and the Foreign Service cannot do so and survive.

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14. In the paragraph, Mr. Smith outlines the nature of his responsibilities during his six month temporary assignment on which he bases the conclusions advanced in the following paragraph. It is, of course, very easy to issue sweeping and blanket charges. Senator McCarthy was very good at this, as I well know from a bitter eight year attack for my part in exposing the activities of the John-Edgar Hoover "investigation" of TISA in 1954.

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facts were demanded to substantiate the sweeping charges, the judgment of the Senate about Senator McCarthy is now history.

15. The first specific instance provided by Mr. Smith involves the fact that in the reporting of the Cal Lay school mortaring in March, "The Embassy decided on an interpretation diametrically opposite to my own". That is quite true. The Embassy determined that Mr. Smith's "suspicion" was not supported by either logic or fact. Indeed, there was a much stronger logical presumption that the incident was staged by the communist ICCS delegations to rescue their "PRG"/NVA friends from the very sticky public relations situation in which the Cal Lay incident had placed them. But since we could not establish hard evidentiary material to substantiate the presumption, we reported neither this presumption nor Mr. Smith's "suspicion". The follow-up cable stated, to quote Mr. Smith, "...that the South Vietnamese spared no effort to ensure the success of the investigation". This statement was based on several sources. It was also logical and credible. To one extent I share Mr. Smith's obvious bias against the GVN. Never has any Government been so inept in handling its external public relations. Nevertheless, here was the murder of school children by an indiscriminate NVA/VC mortar attack. Here was the first case where universal horror at the death and maiming of these innocent children had forced the Hungarians and the Poles to actually participate in a field investigation. There were powerful incentives for the GVN to make every effort to ensure no untoward incident which could detract from establishing the clear fact that "PRG"/NVA action was responsible for the death of the children. As inept as the GVN has often been in getting the truth out, they are not really stupid enough to play into the hands of their enemies. Apparently Mr. Smith would also deny the possibility that the Vietnamese might love their children enough to have spontaneously protested even though the GVN had, as the Embassy reported, "spared no effort to ensure the

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success of the investigation". The Hungarian and Polish Delegations, Radio Hanoi, the Budapest press, the "PRG" Liberation Radio and Hanoi's Nhan Dan all agree with Mr. Smith's "suspicion" that local GVN officials had permitted or even planned the demonstrations which brought the investigation to an abrupt end". On the basis of better evidence, accumulated by several elements of the Mission, it was concluded that this was not true. After a recent thorough review I conclude that the Embassy's reporting was solidly based on the evidence. In this review, including the log of Mr. Smith's running report by telephone, I conclude he is a very competent reporter as long as he is dealing with facts, not his "suspicious".

16. In the only two other examples cited by Mr. Smith, he states he was "under instructions from the Acting Consul General in Nha-trang to de-emphasize events which were or could be interpreted as GVN cease-fire violations." Mr. Cook, his Foreign Service colleague referred to, informs me that this is not an accurate statement, that his instructions were to avoid ambiguities and be very cautious with adjectives and simply describe accurately what was going on. Nha-trang's 0361 of 4 June 1974 written by Mr. Smith has the following item:

"3. Kontum: The push toward Vo Dinh initiated by the 41st and 44th Regiments 24 May has bogged down along a line crossing Highway 14 twelve kilometers northwest of Kontum City. Intense shelling of ARVN units continued, with light casualties reported. However the operation may be achieving its main objective: to draw enemy attention away from the isolated outposts of Mang Buk and Chuong Nghia. No incidents were reported at either location during the week. Minor action continues north

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City."

17. The two units involved were identified. It was assumed Washington readers knew how large a regiment is. In any event, a full and complete report from DAO was already available to the principals in Washington.

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"Your last question inquired 'what guarantees there are that Embassy reporting will be objective and that a full spectrum of views can be expressed to the Department.' The answer is, of course, none except my integrity. And

21. I pass over Mr. Smith's subsequent paragraphs on the machinery he recommends since its content makes any comment on its practicality unnecessary. I answered the basic issue in my response to Senator Fulbright last January when I said:

20. I have not had and do not now have the slightest objection to the full and complete description of all military actions, which are routinely reported by the DAO and are available to all Washington agencies. I have assumed those in Washington who were interested in contributing to distortions by forwarding judgments attempting to assess blame to one side or the other for alleged cease-fire violations, since a cease-fire has never existed, and was not really expected to exist by anyone who was at all familiar with the past history of Hanoi's action. Even Mr. Moose in the Senate Staff Report, on which Mr. Smith places such reliance, observed that "lack of respect for the (Paris) Agreement is so widespread that it is impossible to apportion responsibility for the continued fighting. Even in the case of isolated incidents initial responsibility is invariably lost in cycles of action and reaction."

19. No one remembers this incident or issuing any such instruction. I would have preferred Mr. Smith's version since it indicated the GVN was not sitting idly by without taking action against areas from which, as Mr. Smith says, "VC/NVA units had been launching raids." Here again, a full report was already in Washington from DAO before Mr. Smith's report was written.

18. The next and last incident cited by Mr. Smith involves instructions he alleges he was given "to describe a series of operations by GVN units as taking place 'in unpopulated areas adjacent to populated areas' in one coastal province. These were actually deep penetrations into communist base areas from which VC/NVA units had been launching raids. But this latter description, I was

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that, on the basis of a forty year record, is a complete guarantee. Even Mr. David Halberstam, to whose book *The Best and the Brightest* you referred at the time Messrs. Godley, Sullivan and I appeared before you for confirmation, bears indirect testimony to that fact. I am not even mentioned in the book. I am told that when asked how I possibly could be omitted, he replied that the thrust of the book was to demonstrate that when the military machine started rolling no one could stand in its way. Since I had fought bitterly and successfully to keep the Americans totally out of any direct involvement in the Thai insurgency, it would have disproved his thesis to have mentioned me.

If you will refer to another book, Charles Bohlen's *Witness to History*, you will find recorded the precepts for the kind of reporting this Embassy will do. Facts, carefully researched, thoroughly documented, reported without adjectives implying a judgment only history can give. Even the story says, "But the information is still there." Since I have been here, no report has been either stopped or slanted. The officers are beginning to take pride in the fact that our objective is to ensure the most candid, objective, wholly dispassionate reporting to the Department that has ever come out of this Embassy and reporting which will fully live up to the Bohlen tradition. We will report Viet-Nam as it really is, successes, failures, beauty spots and warts. And we will not permit ourselves to be swayed from pursuing this goal by anything a once great newspaper may print."

Nor, I might add, by anyone else.

22 On Mr. Smith's second message. I have no comment except to No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/05/02 : LOC-HAK-242-10-2-9 coverage is itself frequently biased and incomplete.... New York Times coverage has been a particular example," he uses the same press reports in the very next paragraph to justify his conclusion that my testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was inaccurate. Perhaps if he depended more on original sources, the record of the hearings in this case, or a personal interview with me while he was in Viet-Nam (which was always available to any

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26. I said in the beginning I shared Mr. Smith's distaste for the Department's responses to him. My reasons are obviously different. The channel was set up for dissent on "policy" issues according to the communications to the field announcing its creation. Mr. Smith's communications would not seem to fit the description. Mr. Smith's

25. But more troubling is the concept of dissent this paragraph dis- plays. What Mr. Smith seems to be seeking is not the opportunity for legitimate and reasoned dissent, but licensed anarchy, to be engaged in at will, with full and complete guarantees absolving him from any responsibilities for his actions. In twenty-seven years in the Foreign Service of the forty years I have spent in the service of the American people I have, it seems in retrospect, to have been engaged in constant dissent. I still am. I have given it some thought and offered publicly in 1968 some "Reflections on Dissent". Having always asserted my right to dissent, I have always been meticulous in assuring that right to others. But I never assumed I could dissent without risk even if I had carefully prepared a case which would establish my dissent was responsible, serious, and based on incon- trovertible fact. With the thought that it just possibly could have some relevance I am attaching a copy of those remarks as Annex E and call attention to the closing paragraph.

24. The statements made by me before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are the exact truth and had Mr. Smith bothered to ask he could have easily so ascertained while he was here.

utterly damning self-indictment I ever recall seeing.

23. Paragraph six of Mr. Smith's second message perhaps explains why he sought no such interview or, as far as I can determine, dis- cussed with any of his supervisors while here, the enormous distor- tion that were according to him, taking place. The only tentative that Mr. Smith, and, if we are to believe him, others of his colleagues, did not have the courage of their convictions to raise their concerns with their superiors. Rather they would wait until, with OERS safely tucked away, they would indulge in such charges from the safety of a post half way round the world. That paragraph is the most savage, utterly damning self-indictment I ever recall seeing.

23. Paragraph six of Mr. Smith's second message perhaps explains why he sought no such interview or, as far as I can determine, dis- cussed with any of his supervisors while here, the enormous distor- tion that were according to him, taking place. The only tentative

FSO who requested one) perhaps both his reporting and his con- clusions would be more soundly based.

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I agree! [?] communications are, in reality, an attack on the integrity, honesty, and competence of a fellow member of the Foreign Service. This doesn't bother me personally. It has been tried over the years by far abler antagonists. It has been tried this year. I am perfectly able to defend myself, and a record of forty years of total integrity really makes me impervious to this kind of attack. As certain politicians have discovered this year the circulation of distortions about me can have results that are politically disastrous to them. But I am concerned, for others, that this kind of attack can be widely circulated, without prior notice to the officer so attacked, simply because its author forwarded it through the "Dissent Channel". I suggest this is a prostitution of the Secretary's intent when he established the "Dissent" procedure.

27. My other objection centers on the fact that when questioned on the release of the Senate Staff Report, the Department spokesman, with the personal approval of the Secretary, expressed total confidence in the integrity of the reporting of the U. S. Mission in Saigon. Even the procedure recommended by Mr. Smith in paragraph 16 of his first message contemplates that the Secretary's determination is final.

This is the same 28. Therefore, to indicate, as S/P's replies to Mr. Smith does that there is still an open question to be resolved by the forthcoming inspection would seem to imply that the Inspectors are better able to arrive at such a conclusion than is the Secretary, an implication I rather think the Secretary may find both distasteful and absurd.

29. This reply is too long. If I were concerned only over the attack on me I would have ignored it. The two "Dissent" messages, and the Department's response, highlight a more important issue. The report I wrote for the Foreign Service Association in 1968, published under the title, Toward a Modern Diplomacy, included an annex on

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appears the following:

"c. Evaluation: The real test of openness for the foreign service comes at the policy-making phase when debate is hot and differences are engaged. The tendency of policy formulators from desk officers on up to resent outside advice or resist debate is a natural bureaucratic reaction. The foreign service must, however, play a more active role in

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34. The Secretary has already directed that it be publicly announced that the Department has complete confidence in the integrity and completeness of the reporting of the Saigon Mission. I have been told that it is horrible to be nibbled to death by ducks, but when they are your own ducks it is both obscene and ridiculous. Therefore, having the old-fashioned idea that his subordinate bureaucracy cannot overrule the Secretary, I consider the matter closed and I shall not address it again.

33. As a matter of fact, I have not the slightest objection to whatever wider distribution may be desired, including Mr. Moose of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Staff, and the press. And to ease the slight twinge of conscience which might impede the inclination of some to leak it, I am sending this message as "Unclassified".

32. Therefore, assuming all Foreign Service Officers have the same rights under the "dissent" procedure, even those temporarily detached while serving the President as Chief of Mission, I suggest this message be considered a "dissent" from all four of the referenced messages and be accorded the same distribution as they received, adding the Director of Personnel. Those messages and this response are being sent by me to all Foreign Service Officers in Viet-Nam.

31. The "Dissent Channel", in my opinion, is important. It should be preserved. It is not likely to be if those charged by the Secretary with monitoring its use continue to permit it to be abused as it has been in this case.

The "Dissent Channel" is a logical outgrowth of that exercise and the subsequent Macomber Task Forces which it spawned. believed what we had to say was important enough to pay the price.

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30. That report was, in and of itself, a "Dissent". It was done in the name of the Department, and it, therefore,

devising new ways to keep debate alive and to support the objectives of those parts of the bureaucracy whose primary function is to question established policy."

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The Chairman. The committee will come to order.

OPENING STATEMENT

We are meeting this afternoon to hear a report from our Ambassador in Viet-Nam, Ambassador Graham Martin. He has a very long and distinguished career in Foreign Service.

Earlier this year there appeared an article in the New York Times which was brought to my attention by the staff, and prompted me to write a letter to the Secretary of State. By way of background for the hearings I think that letter and then a reply from the Ambassador should be put in the record.

(The information referred to follows:)

Hon. Henry A. Kissinger
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

January 24, 1974

Dear Mr. Secretary: I was somewhat disturbed at the article in the January 17 issue of the New York Times entitled "U. S. Envoy Runs Tight Saigon Ship; Curbs News, Strongly Backs Thieu," a copy of which is enclosed. I hope that the Embassy in Saigon is not going down the same road again that contributed to official U. S. misperceptions of Viet-Nam in the past--the road of thought control, censorship of Embassy reporting, lack of contact and communication with the press. I have learned from experience that when press accounts to this effect appear from normally reliable reporters they usually have some basis in fact.

I wonder if you might inquire and let me know what American officials in general, and with regard to requests for interviews, what the Ambassador's policy is with regard to access by members of the press to the Defense Attache's Office and what guarantees there are that Embassy reporting will be objective and that a full spectrum of views can be expressed to the Department.

From other sources I am aware that several American news

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The 61-year-old career diplomat, whose ambassadorial style is restrictive to the point of secretiveness, rarely ventures outside the white, fortresslike embassy in downtown Saigon. Unlike his predecessor, Ellsworth Bunker, Mr. Martin sees only a restricted circle of high-ranking South Vietnamese officials; he has no known contact with opposition figures. There are some middle-level members of his staff he has not met. One American jokingly calls him God. "I know he exists, but I haven't seen him," this embassy aide remarked.

A Baptist minister's son born in Mars Hill, N. C., Mr. Martin is said to be a strong family man and, according to friends, a devoted friend. He reportedly spends a good deal of time with his

Salgon, South Viet-Nam, Jan. 16-In Ambassador Graham A. Martin's six months in Saigon, he has asserted firm control of the sprawling official American community, established a severely restrictive public-information policy and given almost uncritical support to the Government of President Nguyen Van Thieu.

(By James M. Markham)

U. S. ENVOY RUNS TIGHT SAIGON SHIP; CURBS NEWS, STRONGLY BACKS THIEU

(From the New York Times, Jan. 17, 1974)

Sincerely yours,
J. W. Fulbright, Chairman

media in performing its functions in South Viet-Nam.

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organizations have encountered severe difficulties in maintaining their representation in Viet-Nam. Some journalists have been refused extension of their visas and others have been denied admittance. We understand that the Embassy in Saigon has been of minimal assistance to the U. S. individuals and organizations involved in these difficulties. These reports are

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wife, Dorothy, in the heavily guarded ambassadorial residence. One of their four children, an adopted son who was a helicopter pilot, was killed in a crash in South Viet-Nam in 1966.

After Mr. Martin graduated from Wake Forest College in 1932 and before he joined the Government, he was a correspondent for several small Southern newspapers in the South and in Washington, and he has retained a strong, even passionate, interest in the press. He has been known to lecture visitors about the damage that "irresponsible" reporting did to the American effort in Viet-Nam, and he is evidently determined not to suffer similar reporting while here.

"Everyone knows that he's the boss, that he's in charge," a Foreign Service officer said admiringly, contrasting the Martin tenure with the loose, almost baronial system over which Ambassador Bunker presided.

According to associates, both a streak of insomnia and a passion to sift through raw intelligence data keep Mr. Martin up at home until 2 in the morning, reading almost everything written by his subordinates. This emphasis on detail has lifted the spirits of some Foreign Service officers who appreciate the attention but others say there is distinct pressure to cast things in an optimistic light. "He doesn't like what he calls internal biased or defeatist reporting," an American explained. "So instead of saying that the South Vietnamese Army suffered disastrous defeat, we say that it suffered a setback, losing 80 men, 12 trucks, 15 guns. But the information's still there."

A REVERSAL ON RICE

According to one account, the embassy was rather glumly reporting on the rice situation in one part of the country until it became evident that a fresh infusion of rice from the United States was needed. "The reporting reversed gear," a diplomat said.

Publicly Mr. Martin takes an extremely rosy view of South Viet-Nam and its future at a time when many well-informed South

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Access to American officials has been sharply restricted since his arrival in mid-July. Veteran Viet-Nam correspondents who periodically return to Saigon find that old friends in the mission are nervous about talking with them.

As a young man, before he joined the government, Mr. Martin was a correspondent for several small Southern newspapers, and he has retained a strong, even passionate, interest in the press. He has been known to lecture visitors about the damage that "irresponsible" reporting did to the American effort in Viet-Nam, and he is evidently determined not to suffer similar reporting while here.

A devoted family man and, according to friends, a devoted friend, Mr. Martin is said to spend a good deal of his time with his wife, Dorothy, in the heavily guarded ambassadorial residence. Their adopted son, a helicopter pilot, was killed in a crash in South Viet-Nam in 1966.

"He's at the end of his career, he didn't really want to come here in the first place," another diplomat has said. "He wants to retire to his farm in Tuscany. He doesn't particularly care what people think of him."

According to a report from there, the Ambassador has been a prime mover in a campaign to obtain \$1-billion in sophisticated weapons for the South Vietnamese armed forces to off-set up-to-date weaponry reportedly infiltrated by the Communists.

The American envoy's firm support has reportedly alienated Mr. Thieu and his closest aides, who are said to consider Mr. Martin their strongest lobbyist in Washington.

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"If he were pessimistic there would be nothing to do," said an ambassador who generally admires Mr. Martin's approach to his job.

Vietnamese do not. To visitors he praises President Thieu lavishly and asserts that his Government is rooting out corruption and that it holds no political prisoners.

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PASSES ON INTERVIEWS

The Ambassador personally passes upon interviews with members of the embassy who hold sensitive posts and has almost completely cut off journalists' official access to the Defense Attache's Office.

Officials were recently instructed to talk only about their own "areas of responsibility"--a somewhat vague injunction that has made some career-minded members of the mission even jumpier with the press than they already were.

Theoretically, if you know about roads and bridges, you can't talk about blowing up roads and bridges," said a young Foreign Service officer stationed outside Saigon.

Defenders of Mr. Martin's press policy say he is trying to reduce the appearance of American interference in South Viet-Nam's internal affairs, while critics in the embassy say, as one put it, that he is "hiding a pretty good story that we have to tell."

Correspondents of The New York Times in Saigon have repeatedly requested interviews with Mr. Martin; none have been granted.

Hon. J. W. Fulbright,
U. S. Senate
Washington, D. C.

Saigon, Viet-Nam,
February 5, 1974.

Dear Mr. Chairman: I have just received today the text of your letter of January 24 to the Secretary. It is most welcome to me. No Objection To Declassification in Full 2011/05/02 : LOC-HAK-242-10-2-9ty,
which I would not otherwise seek, to respond fully and completely to the concerns you have expressed.

For more than the forty years I have spent in the service of the people of the United States the one asset I have prized most highly is a reputation for complete and total integrity. It is a

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I hope, therefore, that you can accept my categorical assurance that, as long as I am charged with this Mission "the Embassy in Saigon is not going down the same road again that contributed to official U. S. misperceptions of Viet-Nam in the past -- the road of thought control, censorship of Embassy reporting, lack of contact and communication with the press". The historical record will completely attest that it was my rather acid criticisms from Bangkok of just these factors of Saigon reporting which got me in serious trouble a decade ago with both the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense. I would even agree with the last sentence of your first paragraph stating, "I have learned from experience that when press accounts to this effect appear from normally reliable reporters they usually have some basis in fact". In this case, I would add the caveat that your adjectives "normally reliable" could only be accorded the old Scotch verdict - "not proven".

My policy concerning press contacts is governed, inevitably, by my own experience as a working journalist. I was regarded as a good reporter. I often wonder what would have happened had I accepted the invitation to do a column for the Washington Post. Perhaps today it might be my byline rather than Scotty Reston's to which you would turn over your morning coffee. And I might have been tempted to observe that I was probably the only living person who, as a working journalist, had covered the last case in which the Senate sat as a Court of Impeachment.

Perhaps, as some of my journalist friends have observed,

are finally open for their inspection, particularly so for the reports and comments dealing with Southeast Asia.

evident to historians when the archives containing all my reports are finally open for their inspection, particularly so for the reports and comments dealing with Southeast Asia.

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no matter what the personal cost might be. This fact is too widely but one from which I determined long ago I would not be diverted, reached. This is a risky course and, at times, a costly course to hear only that which supported conclusions they have already truth even when to do so was certain to offend those who wished or evade reporting and saying what I believed to be the exact deserved reputation for I have flatly refused either to equivocate

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I left the profession so young that I still regarded it as a profession - not a trade. I thought then and now that those who were fortunate enough to enjoy the protection of the First Amendment had a corollary professional responsibility to inform the American people of the whole truth as clearly and completely as one might perceive it after persistent digging, cross checking, and making every attempt to insure that all facts were accurate. Under no circumstances would one slant a story either to conform to an editor's known prejudices or to push one's own personal point of view. Those who did were not regarded as journalists but as propagandists - the word we used was "flacks". Nevertheless, I still maintain a deep and almost passionate conviction that a free press, even with its, fortunately small, most rotten and biased elements, is an absolutely indispensable ingredient for the preservation of our freedom.

Believing this it is, of course, essential that I would insure we provide for an effective and orderly mechanism to provide as completely and accurately as we possibly can answers to questions presented to this Embassy by American news correspondents. This is and will continue to be my policy. To provide this service I have requested that press inquiries be channeled through the Counselor of Embassy for Press Affairs, a senior, experienced and highly capable officer who will either obtain and make available the information if it is readily accessible or arrange for an interview with a senior official responsible for the area with which the question deals. The story is quite correct that I have observed that it makes little contribution to accuracy of the information reaching the American people if officers speculated in talks with newsmen on matters about which they were not informed. In such cases, it would be better if the reporter talked with the real expert in the field covered by his question. It's just as well, perhaps, that the reporter was not told the rest of that observation.

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with mess sergeants on the high strategy of the war, during our extensive and unnecessary military involvement, had made a great contribution to public enlightenment. Of course, neither had the interviews with the Generals. Nevertheless, I thought that, perhaps, our experts could do better. I still think this to be sound advice.

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My practice in regard to requests for interviews is to grant them whenever possible. I have probably spent more hours with journalists than has been justified, but I do feel the compulsion I mentioned earlier to contribute as I can to the proper exercise of a free press. I obviously cannot grant all requests. I feel no compulsion at all to grant interviews to reporters from papers whose emotional involvement in a North Vietnamese victory is

To those reporters, including those of the New York Times, who now had to work a bit harder to get their information from those actually involved in the fighting, this naturally becomes the establishment of "a severely restrictive public information policy". I do not so regard it nor do I believe you would wish me to revert to the previous procedure.

I found this still continuing when I arrived. I ordered it stopped. We are now engaged in no way in the fighting which is going on as a result of the North Vietnamese decision to raise the intensity of the violence of their attacks in violation of the Paris Agreements. Therefore, I thought it highly improper that we should appear to be speaking in any way for either side or that the CIA should be briefing the press in any event. Similarly with the Defense Attache office. Its role is wholly concerned with logistics. It is precluded from any advisory role in the fighting that is taking place. Its personnel are logistically trained, not as combat personnel. Therefore, to permit continuation of briefings or comments on the course of the fighting would not only give a completely false indication of our involvement in the fighting but would quite probably be beyond their professional competence. I suggested this also cease.

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Most of the press have found these arrangements quite satisfactory. Some have not. For example, during the 1972 offensive by the North Vietnamese forces, when American forces were still present and American airpower was actively engaged, my predecessor authorized CIA officials to routinely and regularly brief the press in order to give the American people a full and accurate picture of the fighting.

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transparently clear and whose reporting, features, and editorials combine to present gross and blatant distortions to the public. To do so would permit my own reputation for integrity to be used as a platform to deceive the American people and this I simply will not do no matter what the personal cost. The last line of the story was one of the few that was wholly accurate. It states, "Correspondents of the New York Times in Saigon have repeatedly requested interviews with Mr. Martin; none have been granted." Another phrase could have been added: "and it is highly unlikely that any will be in the future". That, too, would have been accurate.

Your last question inquired "what guarantees there are that Embassy reporting will be objective and that a full spectrum of views can be expressed to the Department". The answer is, of course, none except my own integrity. And that, on the basis of a forty year record, is a complete guarantee. Even Mr. David Halberstam, to whose book The Best and the Brightest you referred at the time Messrs. Godley, Sullivan and I appeared before you for confirmation, bears indirect testimony to that fact. I am not even mentioned in the book. I am told that when asked how I possibly could be omitted, he replied that the thrust of the book was to demonstrate that when the military machine started rolling no one could stand in its way. Since I had fought bitterly and successfully to keep the Americans totally out of any direct involvement in the Thai insurgency, it would have disproved his thesis to have mentioned me.

If you will refer to another book, Charles Bohlen's Witness to History, you will find recorded the precepts for the kind of reporting this Embassy will do. Facts, carefully researched, thoroughly documented, reported without adjectives implying a judgment only history can give. Even the story says, "But the
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has been either stopped or slanted. The officers are beginning to take pride in the fact that our objective is to ensure the most candid, objective, wholly dispassionate reporting to the Department that has ever come out of this Embassy and reporting which will fully live up to the Bohlen tradition. We will report Viet-Nam

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The Chairman. Several members of the committee at that time had requested that when the Ambassador was back in Washington it would be useful to have him before the committee to give us some report upon the situation in Viet-Nam and what he thought about it. That is the reason we are having him today.

Graham Martin

Sincerely,

I apologize for the length of this letter but I wanted to be certain that, as always, I responded fully to any request that might come from you or the Committee.

and accuracy that once made it a truly great institution. New York Times may yet return to the standards of objectivity which I first wrote, I took the risk in the forlorn hope that the New York Times has recently purchased the newspaper for firmation hearing. Nevertheless, noting with great sadness that affairs of another country you indicated were proper at my con- probably exceeded the limits of intervention into the internal and the return of his notes. In fact, my own personal intervention of American MIAs. The Embassy intervened to secure his release as an apologist for Hanoi, even including their incredible record along as interpret a non-journalist "peace activist" well known routinely forthcoming. He compounded this offense by taking obtaining prior permission as required which would have been Mr. Markham visited certain PRG controlled areas without disregard of the regulations well known to all correspondents, author of the article to which you have referred. In complete full extent of that intervention. The most recent case is the vened in their behalf although we do not always tell them the media have promulgated, this Embassy has consistently inter-

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I am afraid the other sources quoted in the last paragraph of your letter are no more accurate than Mr. Markham's story.

And we will not permit ourselves to be swayed from pursuing this goal by anything a once great newspaper may print. as it really is, successes, failures, beauty spots and wars.

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We are very pleased to have you, Ambassador Martin. I believe you have a statement?

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SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT ON REPORTING
QUESTION OF ACCURACY OF SAIGON EMBASSY'S REPORTING

The Chairman. One last area here with regard to the material which I inserted and about which I wrote the Secretary, is the question of reporting from the Saigon Embassy. There seems still to be some question about the accuracy of the reporting.

We have a recent report from our staff which I quote:

"A review of the material used by the Embassy to prepare these reports indicates that the thrust of information submitted from the field to Saigon is sometimes altered and that on occasion significant information is withheld altogether. One consistent pattern which emerges from a study of these reports is the Embassy's tendency to play down or to ignore obvious cease-fire violations by the South Vietnamese Armed Forces.

This spring, for example, one consulate general reported to Saigon the conclusion of a large Government operation designed to clear out a Communist base area and noted that hundreds of homes and bunkers had been destroyed. In summarizing this information, in its weekly report to Washington, the Embassy made no mention of the Government operation, but noted instead an overall decline in military activity despite significant Communist attacks." Do you wish to comment on that?

Mr. Martin. Yes, sir.

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the incident is -- but many times in order to avoid the sort of ceaseless flood of paper we have not reported through "State channels" what has already been reported either through Defense channels or through the CIA channels.

Now, I have just been made aware of the implications in this staff report. It surprises me because basically I do not believe there is the slightest foundation to it.

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"The Embassy is also known to make substantial deletions in reports from its consulates general before relaying them to Washington. Earlier this year, one of these posts reported to Saigon a serious deterioration in security within its military region. The message in

These same officials did, however, express concern that those who rely on the Embassy's reporting could be misinformed. Other U. S. officials discount the importance of this practice, noting that the Embassy's biases are well known and supplemental sources of information are available.

It says: "Some U. S. officials with whom this reporting" -- this is the practice to which I have already referred -- "was discussed, point out that the question of who initiates a given military action is not of itself a significant matter given the fact that both sides constantly violate the agreement. That is the Paris peace agreement.

The report will as a whole be published; it is already available to the committee. I will read one more paragraph and I will yield to my colleagues.

The Chairman. It is a very worthy goal, but the representatives of this committee, both of whom I believe had experience in foreign service are very experienced observers, seem to have a very different report.

goal. It will continue to be my goal. no imprecision in the reporting from Viet-Nam. That has been my importance and involve considerable sums of money, that there be time when decisions are being made, which are of considerable or opinion, it be identified as such. I think we are entitled at this from rumors, from opinion. They can report it all, but I insist rumor beginning in getting some of our younger officers to separate fact they are, the whole truth. We have had some difficulties in the in Viet-Nam is to see that we report to Washington the total facts as I mean to get it totally understood that what we are trying to do now my conviction, and is one on which I have worked as hard as I could.

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Now, I have consulted with my colleagues here in Washington who are responsible for Vietnamese affairs and I have been assured that they have been completely satisfied that in the totality of the reporting that comes from all sources in Saigon, there have been no significant omissions of any kind.

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question included five specific references to declining security conditions or poor performances on the part of Government forces. In this instance, the text of the consulate general's report was relayed to Washington but only after the passages in question had been deleted, thereby eliminating significant aspects of the field assessment. Readers in Washington had no way of knowing that the message had been altered."

Then the more important deletions are referred to.

Mr. Martin. I would say again, I am sorry to have to completely disagree, Mr. Chairman --

ACCURACY OF REPORTING BY SAIGON EMBASSY

The Chairman. This report compared to the report of the press, to which you have taken serious objections, does raise a very serious question about the accuracy of our information. I would ask that the staff report be printed in the record after it has been through the executive branch clearance process. (See appendix.)

Mr. Martin. I, of course, have not seen it and it is difficult for me to comment on it without seeing it, and if it would be agreeable to you, Mr. Chairman, I think in fairness it would be perhaps a contribution in determining the accuracy of the situation as it really exists to permit me after I have seen the totality of this particular section to insert my own comments immediately following.

The Chairman. Certainly.

(The information referred to follows:)

12-17-65 Committee Staff Report)
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Over the years the American Embassy in Saigon has acquired a reputation, among both official and unofficial observers, for close identification with the policies of the South Vietnamese government and for selective reporting. These same tendencies are apparent today.

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Some U. S. officials with whom this reporting was discussed point out that the question of who initiates a given military action is not of itself a significant matter given the fact that both sides

There was an increase in military activity in ...
initiated incidents were at the lowest level for a year.
provide as a result of (government) operations. Communist

Most (of the incidents) occurring in ... and ... might
be attributed to elimination by ... (South Vietnamese)
divisions of (enemy) minibases... in accordance with the
MR commander's instructions";

Most contacts in (locations deleted) were the result
of RVNAF (South Vietnamese) initiatives";

We encountered many other instances in which South Vietnamese
offensive initiatives were not reported to Washington. The following
are examples of items contained in field summaries but which were
omitted from the Embassy's weekly round-up:

One consistent pattern which emerges from a study of these
reports is the Embassy's tendency to play down or to ignore obvious
cease-fire violations by the South Vietnamese armed forces. This
conclusion of a large government operation designed to "clear out a
Communist base area" and noted that "hundreds of homes and bunkers
had been destroyed." In summarizing this information in its weekly
report to Washington the Embassy made no mention of the government
operation, but noted instead an overall decline in military activity
despite "significant Communist attacks."

Each week the four consulates general in South Viet-Nam send
the Embassy a round-up of events relating to the military situation
and the implementation of the Paris Agreement. The Embassy sub-
mits a summary of this information, together with comments on
developments in Saigon, in the form of a weekly telegraphic report
to Washington. A review of the material used by the Embassy to
omit from the field to Saigon is sometimes altered and not on
occasion significant information is withheld altogether.

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constantly violate the Agreement. These same officials did, however, express concern that those who rely on the Embassy's reporting could be misinformed. Other U. S. officials discount the importance of this practice, noting that the Embassy's biases are well known and that supplemental sources of information are available.

The Embassy is also known to make substantial deletions in reports from its consulates general before relaying them to Washington. Earlier this year, one of these posts reported to Saigon a serious deterioration in security within its military region. The message in question included five specific references to declining security conditions or poor performances on the part of government forces. In this instance, the text of the consulate general's report was relayed to Washington but only after the passages in question had been deleted. Readers in Washington had no way of knowing that the message had been altered. The more important deletions were as follows:

This latest round of VC/NVA attacks further eroded security in some provinces where deterioration which began in December must now be viewed as serious.

Overall security in has fallen sharply since December, a condition which province officers say they are powerless to remedy with existing forces.

Last week the province chief learned that an accommodation had been reached between the RF company in and VC in the area by which RF soldiers were allowed to travel unarmed by sampan from their outpost unhindered. The province chief immediately ordered the company out on operations,.... (province) like (province) has seen security decline markedly in 1974.

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Although Embassy reporting normally downplays government initiatives, it sometimes highlights successful operations. In February 1974, as noted in an earlier section, two South Vietnamese regiments attacked a long time Communist base area at Tri Phap in the delta. Embassy summaries at the time referred to the operation as follows: "The successful six weeks GVN (South Vietnamese

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The Embassy, both in briefings provided to us and in its reporting to Washington, closely followed the public line of the South Vietnamese government in justifying the South Vietnamese measures which precipitated the temporary breakdown in May 1974 of the talks in Paris and Saigon between the South Vietnamese and the Provisional Revolutionary Government. The ostensible cause of this break was what President Thieu's spokesmen widely publicized on April 12 as a "massive North Vietnamese ground attack supported by tanks," which allegedly "overran" the long besieged border outpost of Tong Le Chan and presumably resulted in the loss of its entire garrison. In the following days, according to the Department of State, the South Vietnamese "reacted politically" by suspending their participation in the bilateral talks with the Provisional Revolutionary Government at La Celle St. Cloud in Paris and further isolating the Communist military delegates at Tan Son Nhut in Saigon by cutting their telephone lines, suspending

In this connection we noted that briefing officers on the Defense Attache staff as well as Embassy officers generally employ terms such as "consolidation" or "pacification" activities and "security operations" when referring to what are, in reality, offensive actions by the South Vietnamese army. North Vietnamese and Provisional Revolutionary Government statements refer to such activities by the government as "land grabbing."

into the Cal Lay school atrocity." A similar comment was lacking in the Embassy's treatment of the Tri Phap operation. Both the reported government attack on Tri Phap and the apparent Communist mortar attack on Cal Lay were, of course, violations of the ceasefire.

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government) operation against Tri Phap continues. " In early April, the Embassy reported that the government had "concluded the pacification phase of its military efforts and began to consolidate its control through outposts and construction and preparation for permanent resettlement."

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weekly liaison flights to the Provisional Revolutionary Government headquarters and cancelling the weekly Saigon press conferences of the Provisional Revolutionary Government representatives. In response, the Communists suspended participation in the Two Party military team meetings and the missing in action talks (Four Party Joint Military Team) in Saigon and announced the "sine die" suspension of the Paris sessions.

Within a few days following the fall at Tong Le Chan, it became widely known in Saigon that the outpost had not, in fact, been overrun by tanks and infantry but rather had been abandoned by the South Vietnamese in the face of increasing Communist pressure. According to reliable American and foreign observers the commander of the outpost informed Saigon in early April that his position had become untenable. The government was then faced with a decision of whether to sacrifice the garrison in a last ditch defense or to attempt to extricate its personnel. Not wanting to undermine the morale of other isolated bases or to appear to be surrendering, Saigon apparently decided to exploit the situation for propaganda purposes. On the night of April 11, the government defenders withdrew from the outpost taking 65 wounded with them, and made their way to safety without any losses. U. S. military officials now concede that what the government first portrayed as a heroic last stand ("a little Dien Bien Phu") and what later appeared to have been a skillfully executed strategic withdrawal, was, in fact, facilitated by the North Vietnamese who "surrounded" the outpost -- on three sides -- and allowed the defenders to leave unmolested.

Although the Embassy must have had access to these facts, it reported to Washington April 16 what it described as the Communists' "transparent attempt to distract attention from their over-
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admission of the fall of Tong Le Chan" noting that Communist media had "...
(North Vietnamese) ground forces, asserting instead that the defenders fled their base." For at least two weeks thereafter, the Embassy, even in its telegrams to Washington, supported the government's exploitation of the Tong Le Chan incident. On April 24 the Embassy noted that the "...bombardment and fall of Tong Le Chan have caused the (South Vietnamese government) to be less generous in its application of the eleven point privileges

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I have now had the opportunity to review pages 13-17 of the Staff Report dated August 5, 1974. I am compelled to reiterate the regret I expressed to the Committee on July 25 that the author of this section of the report did not utilize the opportunity to discuss its substance with me during his visit to Saigon. Had this happened perhaps the Committee would have had a more accurate assessment of the accuracy of the reporting of the U. S. Diplomatic Mission in

RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF REPORT

SUBSEQUENT COMMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARTIN ON FOREIGN

Even those officials who are critical of the Embassy's reporting note that it contains one significant new element. In the past the Embassy's institutional memory has consisted of the personal expertise of a few individuals. During the past year the Embassy has devoted considerable attention to the study of leadership, and the interlocking political, social and financial patterns of Vietnamese society. In contrast with past practice, the Embassy's reporting on these subjects is now said to be perceptive, frank and of significant potential value to policy makers.

Americans noted that the Embassy must bear a significant measure of responsibility for having encouraged them to do so. and conceded that they "might have overreached themselves." Other effort to "position itself as the victim of North Vietnamese violations," alleged that the South Vietnamese government had made a determined senior U. S. official with whom we discussed this problem acknowledges for future negotiation among the Vietnamese parties. One concern at the impact of this public relations campaign on the prospects for South Viet-Nam. Some American officials, however, expressed Congress of the necessity to authorize additional military assistance government, assisted by the U. S. Embassy, to impress the U. S.

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Many foreign observers in Saigon, including members of the diplomatic corps, believe that the extensive publicity which the Saigon government was giving to the Tong Le Chan incident and and immunities accorded to the Communist delegations and to take a less permissive approach to 'PRG' behavior."

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Saigon. As it is written, the part of the report is just plain wrong in most of its specifics and totally wrong in its implications.

No attempt has been made, and none will be, to have "Embassy" or "State Department" reporting duplicate reporting by other elements of the U. S. Diplomatic Mission. It is true that, quite often, sections of reports from the Consulate Generals will be eliminated from routine weekly reports because the substance had already been reported to Washington by other elements of the U. S. Diplomatic Mission. The illustrations given on pages 14 and 15 come within this framework.

The "Tong Le Chan" incident cited on page 14 is of a different character. What is not cited is that the Government of Viet-Nam did not actually know the post had been evacuated on decision of its Commander against specific orders not to do so. When all contact was lost, the GVN logically assumed that it had been overrun. The report says that "Although the Embassy must have had access to these facts...." the truth is that not until the remnants of the garrison showed up some days later did the GVN know precisely what had happened. Washington was completely and currently informed of all information as soon as it was known in Saigon. The conclusion attributed to U. S. military officials in the last sentence of the first paragraph on page 16 that the "skillfully executed strategic withdrawal" was in fact facilitated by the North Vietnamese is not supported by any competent U. S. military official known to me.

Similarly, the report notes that "On April 24 the Embassy noted that the ".....bombardment and fall of Tong Le Chan have caused the (South Vietnamese government) to be less generous in
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accorded to the Communist delegations and to take a more
sive approach to 'PRG' behavior." This is, of course, a true statement. Over 900 mortar rounds fell on Tong Le Chan within one hour just before all contact was lost. The post did "fall", and it is also, of course, true that the fact that the fall of this outpost which had always been under GVN control did cause the

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Now I understand you have also made some points in this committee, and I think this committee has endorsed them, on the role of an ambassador. I have myself very definite feelings about this which I understand are in line with those of the committee.

Mr. Martin. I would repeat what I have said before, I think in these instances if they had been called to my attention at the time of the staff visit to Saigon, rather than uncritically accepting comments of unnamed people who are quoted as saying whatever it is, we would find that the information which was taken out of one report had already been reported in another.

It is quite true that the reporting of the U. S. Mission in Saigon now has a bias. It is to see that the U. S. Government, the American people and the American Congress receive the whole truth about current realities in Viet-Nam. As long as it remains in my charge, that is the only bias that will be followed.

With respect to footnote 1 on page 16, the use of quotation marks in reference to the "PRG" (Provisional Revolutionary Government), or a qualifying term such as "so-called PRG", is necessary and appropriate in diplomatic parlance since the United States Government neither recognizes this organization as a government nor considers it a legitimate representative of the South Vietnamese people.

Similarly, only the penultimate sentence of the third paragraph of page 16 has even any partial validity. In the "maneuvering around Ben Cat" between 16 May and June 30 more than 3,990 casualties were incurred by both sides according to DOD. It is hardly credible to any objective observer that either side would have incurred such costs to "impress the U. S. Congress."

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All of this information would have been available to the staff member had he bothered to inquire about it rather than depend on a combination of a partial examination of Embassy GVN "to be less generous in its application of the eleven point privileges and immunities..."

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I do not run the U. S. Embassy alone. I am responsible for the totality of the U. S. activities there.

No, when it is said that the Embassy's reporting, which I think as mentioned here is shorthand for State Department reporting, is supplemented by other sources, I regard it all as my reporting. Other sources, I assume, means other agencies. I also assume other agencies are present in Viet-Nam because it involves the foreign policy of the United States, otherwise they would not be there. Since this is the case, I assume the responsibility for their actions and their reporting.

If the reports come in, then, through other channels and are made available to the senior officials here in Washington who are responsible for the area, I am not necessarily all that interested in seeing that they are duplicated in State Department channels.

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MEMORANDUM

Date: December 2, 1974

TO: The Ambassador

FROM: POL/INT: Lacy A. Wright

SUBJECT: Answer to Dissent Message of Charles B. Smith, Jr.

This report is in response to your request to me November 27 to prepare suggestions for a reply to Mr. Smith's second dissent message (State 260507). I would propose that the Embassy answer Mr. Smith's specific allegations in the following manner.

- A. Mr. Smith charges the Embassy with "consistently and intentionally distorting its reporting" (Belgrade 5659). As evidence for that sweeping statement, he offers two examples (Belgrade A-442). Neither holds water. (Here the Embassy should refute the two allegations in detail.)
- B. Mr. Smith takes issue with the Department's reply (State 225131) to his original dissent message (Belgrade A-442) by proclaiming his lack of confidence that reporting "gaps" noted in A-442 were adequately covered through other reporting channels. In support, he says that "of those channels cited in the Department's reply, the only ones completely unavailable to me were domestic press reports and debriefings of visitors to the Department." (Note: Channels cited by the Department were State, CIA,

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operations of an Embassy knows that Mr. Smith is simply wrong here. Some Embassy messages are known only to the Ambassador; others are restricted to the front office or are limited to various other people or offices. In Consulates General, officers do not even see all messages leaving their own post, let alone all those sent from the Embassy.

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As noted above, Mr. Smith maintains that "there was ... a strong fear of being caught in an erroneous position through postulated information to which only higher levels of the Embassy had access." To say this is simply to acknowledge that an Embassy is hierarchical in structure: if every officer felt himself entitled to make the judgments now reserved to the Ambassador and top mission officers, the result would be reporting chaos as well as a gross infringement on the right of the Ambassador to run his Embassy. The "fear" of which Mr. Smith speaks is one which ought

There is no attempt on Mr. Smith's part to substantiate these charges. He cites not one case of an officer's attempting to present an unpopular view and suffering for it. He did not do so himself while he was here. The same dissent channel that is open to him in Belgrade was open to him -- and others -- here in Saigon. The contention that officers in Viet-Nam did not use this channel because they feared for their careers, if true, speaks poorly for the officers involved. The dissent channel at Embassy Saigon was open then -- and is open now -- for those who wish to employ it.

In the Consulates General in which I worked was such that dissenting officers, considering potential career damage and even working relationships with their superiors, were under strong pressure to do nothing. There was, in addition, a strong fear of being caught in an erroneous position through postulated information to which only higher levels of the Embassy had access."

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C. Mr. Smith takes issue with Ambassador Martin's statement that "younger officers....are entitled to report it all" provided it is accurately labeled. He says that "this was not mission policy as understood in the Consulates General in which I worked. Nor was it, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the effective policy in the Embassy it-

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to grip any officer who contemplates making judgments on matters the scope of which he cannot possibly have the information to comprehend.

- D. Mr. Smith contends that "the fact of this distortion (which he has failed to prove) is damaging to the morale and to the integrity of the Foreign Service." Only individual officers can say how their morale is faring. Mr. Smith's is apparently faring poorly. If others who have served at Embassy Saigon agree, they should speak up.

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